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Gold Nugget Winners Signal New Era in Housing Design

Top projects in this year's "Best in the West" architecture and design competition highlight trend toward smaller, greener, more affordable homes.

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The Classics at Miramonte (Plan 3)

Mountain View, Calif.

The Trend: Small lot development



What is it about a shingled house that looks just right no matter where it is? New England, California, the Midwest--many parts of this country can rightfully claim shingles as their own. With its steep roof and asymmetrical front windows, this quirky, not-so-little, four-bedroom house looks right at home with its more traditional California stucco neighbors. That's something that stood out for the judges. "When grouped with other diverse dwellings in this GreenPoint-rated community, the shingle-style home forms an intimate streetscape that brings back the eclectic charm of early 20th-century California neighborhoods," commented one juror.

Inside, it's all about efficiency and getting the most out of a 2,173-square-foot home on a 35-foot-wide lot. It has three stories, something that's barely noticeable from the outside. The master suite is tucked into the third story, which has been a popular feature with prospective buyers. On the first floor, the open plan features a dining room, living room and kitchen, with an alley-loaded two-car garage off the back. The second floor is packed with three bedrooms, a loft, a laundry room, and one of the home's 2½ baths. There's even a tiny bit of yard in front and back.

Located within walking distance of Mountain View's energetic downtown, the neighborhood is even selling well. Within three weeks of opening, 14 homes had been sold. This positive response has led the builder to start construction on the enclave's remaining 44 homes. In this economy, that's downright spectacular for homes that range from \$1,079,500 to \$1,099,950. —*Kathleen Stanley*

Award: Grand for outstanding detached home on a compact lot

Builder/Developer: Classic Communities, Palo Alto, Calif.

Architect/Land planner: Dahlin Group Architecture Planning, Pleasanton, Calif.